



Washington Township Historical Society
P.O. Box 189
Long Valley, NJ 07853

www.wthsnj.org ■ info@wthsnj.org ■ (908) 876-9696

Collections Management Policy

The Washington Township Historical Society (WTHS) maintains collections relating to the history of Washington Township, Morris County, NJ. The Collections Management Policy details the scope of the collection, its mission, how objects are accessioned and de-accessioned, and how objects are arranged in the collection.

Collections Mission

The mission is to preserve, exhibit and enhance the collections of the Washington Township Historical Society.

According to its bylaws, “the society's major function shall be to discover and collect any material which may help to establish or illustrate the history of the area, its exploration, settlement, development, and activities in peace and war; its progress in population, wealth, education, arts, science, agriculture, manufactures, trade, and transportation. It will collect printed material such as histories, genealogies, biographies, descriptions, gazetteers, directories, newspapers, pamphlets, catalogs, circulars, handbills, programs, and posters; manuscript material such as letters, diaries, journals, memoranda, reminiscences, rosters, service records, account books, charts, surveys, and field books, and museum materials such as pictures, photographs, paintings, portraits, scenes, aboriginal relics, and material objects illustrative of life, conditions, events and activities of the past and present.”

The society contributes to the community by preserving and interpreting its collection and by making it available.

Scope of Collection

The current collections are stored and exhibited at the Washington Township Historical Society Museum located at 6 Fairview Avenue, Long Valley, NJ. WTHS collections and new acquisitions predominantly represent objects pertaining to the history of Washington Township (Morris County, NJ) and bordering towns only if they strongly relate to our local history.

The current major collection categories are:

1. Maps
2. Photographs
3. Library
4. Genealogy/Family Papers
5. Historical Records
6. Material Culture/Artifacts
7. WTHS Archives

Collection Policy

In accordance to its mission, the WTHS collections are expanded and enriched by:

- Selectively building on existing strengths
- Filling gaps in collections
- Introducing and pursuing new areas of collection.

The Museum Committee is responsible for developing, reviewing, and revising the WTHS Collection Policy and the WTHS Board is responsible to approve it.

The primary rationale for collecting is to develop a body of visual and intellectual material that documents and interprets the history of Washington Township.

Space for storage of collections is an important factor, although preferential consideration is given to collections of undeniable significance to WTHS in spite of storage limitations. WTHS discourages the acceptance of collections that do not meet the stringent review required.

Acquisition

Acquisitions are made through gift, bequest, purchase, or exchange and require the approval of the Museum Committee. *Under no circumstances shall any other member make any decision regarding the acquisition of an object. They also may not accept objects, even on a temporary basis, for review by the Museum Committee.*

When an acquisition is accepted, the Accession Form must be completed, and as much information as possible should be obtained from the donor.

To be added to the collection an object MUST meet each of the following criteria:

- The appropriateness to the scope of the collections.
- The potential for exhibition and study.
- The ability of the society to provide storage, protection, and preservation of objects under conditions that insure their availability for WTHS purposes and in keeping with professionally accepted standards.
- The possibility of achieving satisfactory resolution of copyright, trademark, or other restrictions of use or ownership.
- The acceptability of an object's provenance.

Accepting gifts or bequests will be left to the discretion of the Museum Committee except under the following conditions when the Board of Trustees' approval is required:

- When the object or collection has an estimated value of \$1000 or more.
- When large objects are offered (defined as occupying a space, singly or grouped, exceeding 10 cubic feet).
- When an extensive collection is offered (defined as exceeding 20 objects).
- When an object offered represents a new area of collection for WTHS or departs from the principal collecting emphasis of the WTHS Collection Policy.

The packing, transportation, storage or conservation costs of an acquisition shall come out of the Museum Committee budget, pending treasurer's approval.

The acceptance of all gifts and bequests shall be unrestricted. No commitment shall be made as to exhibition, attribution, or placement of the gift. While it is the intention to accession for long-term use and preservation, no guarantee shall be made that the gift or bequest be retained by the Society in perpetuity. There shall be no exceptions to this policy unless the Board of Trustees

considers any such restrictions or special provisions. We are not obliged to accept items bequeathed to WTHS which are not appropriate for our collections.

Under no circumstances will WTHS give an appraisal of objects, or recommended appraisers. WTHS will not pay for an appraisal or reimburse a donor for appraisal costs unless approved by the Board of Trustees.

Temporary Custody/Review, Incoming Loans

The depositor of an object accepted by the WTHS for the purpose of examination, identification, attribution, display, consideration for acquisition, etc., must be issued a receipt stating the terms of acceptance. This receipt will clearly state the following:

- WTHS will give the object the same kind of professional care as objects in its collections, but it will not insure the object while it is in the care of WTHS.
- The duration of time that WTHS is willing to hold the object.
- Conditions for the disposition of the object if left in the custody of WTHS beyond the agreed closing date.

The acceptance of an object to be considered for acquisition does not mean it will be accessioned into the permanent collection.

The "Incoming Loan" form must be completed and the loaned items should be promptly returned. The Museum Committee is responsible for approving the incoming loan.

Outgoing Loans

Loans are made with caution. Unusual requests need to be discussed. Complete the "Outgoing Loan" form and contact Museum Committee for approval prior to the removal of material. Include the date of return on the form, which should be 2 weeks from date of request. If the object leaves the possession of the requestor, include information on who has it on the form.

Permanent Removals

In the event a person or an organization wants to reclaim or repossess an item in the Museum Collection a written request for permanent removal required. Approval by the Board of Trustees is required. The grounds for the request must be included.

De-accession

Removal from the Museum Collection requires a de-accession form. Any de-accession requires Museum Committee approval and then Board of Trustee approval. The disposition is required on the form.

Generally, items that are de-accessioned are donated to non-profit organizations, sold to other institutions or reputable dealers, or a sold during a WTHS yard sale. Sale of items to individuals is discouraged. Profits from the sale will *only* be used for future acquisitions of items related to the mission of WTHS or the conservation of items in the collection and will not be used to pay for general operating support functions.

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